

Date: February 11, 2000

DSL-BQA-00-017

To:	Adult Day Care Centers	ADC 02
	Adult Family Homes	AFH 05
	Ambulatory Surgery Centers	ASC 03
	Community Based Residential Facilities	CBRF 06
	End-Stage Renal Disease	ESRD 03
	Facilities for the Developmentally Disabled (FDDs)	FDD 05
	Home Health Agencies	HHA 05
	Hospices	HSPC 04
	Hospitals	HOSP 08
	Nursing Homes	NH 08
	Rural Health Clinics	RHC 04
	Residential Care Apartment Complexes	RCAC 04

From: Jan Eakins, Chief
Provider Regulation and Quality Improvement Section

cc: Susan Schroeder, Director
Bureau of Quality Assurance

Life Safety Informational Release

The purpose of this memo is to raise awareness and to provide information regarding emergencies in health care facilities. The information is specific to a Fire Watch Procedure template for fire alarm system failures and a Fire Reporting form.

A protective device common to health care facilities is a fire alarm system. When the fire alarm system is taken out of operation, a life threatening situation occurs for all the residents/patients and staff of the facility. Dating back to 1965, the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 101 Life Safety Code (LSC) standard substantiates our position:

2-1112: Every building shall be so constructed, arranged, equipped, maintained and operated as to avoid undue danger to the lives and safety of its occupants from fire.

2-2121: No existing building shall be occupied during repairs or alterations unless any existing fire protection is continuously maintained, or other measures are taken which provide equivalent safety.

2-3112: Every required fire detection and alarm system shall be continuously maintained in proper operating condition.

The method entitled 'fire watch' first appears in the LSC 1997 edition:

7-6.1.8 Fire Alarm System Shutdown: Where a required fire alarm system is out of service for more than 4 hours in a 24-hour period, the authority having jurisdiction shall be notified and the building shall be evacuated or an approved fire watch shall be provided for all parties left unprotected by the shutdown until the fire alarm system has been returned to service.

Please see the first attachment that contains the recommended Fire Watch Procedure template approved by the Bureau. You will need to fill in relevant information so that it is useful for your facilities.

Health care facilities that experience a fire event are required to report the event to the Bureau within a specified timeframe. Examples of such health care facilities are as follows:

- Hospitals, per section HFS 124.36 (11), within 72 hours;
- Nursing Homes, per section HFS 132.82(6)(e), within 72 hours;
- Facilities for the Developmentally Disabled, per section HFS 134.82(4)(e), within 72 hours;
- Community Based Residential Facilities, per section HFS 83.19(3)(a), within 3 working days;
- Adult Family Homes, per section HFS 88.05(4)(e), within 72 hours.

Please refer to the attached Fire Report form (approved by the Bureau) for such incidents. Note that reporting can be via other means, such as a fire department report or a facility letter, signed by the administrator, describing the event.

If you have any questions regarding this information, please contact David R. Soens, Quality Assurance Engineer, at (608) 261-5993.

Attachments: Fire Watch Procedure
Fire Report Form

Fire Watch Procedure Template

Health Care Facilities

PURPOSE: A plan of action should the fire alarm system fail to work properly so as to not provide continuous facility-wide fire detection and alarm capabilities. A fire alarm system could include but is not limited to: fire alarm panel, smoke or heat detection system, sprinkler system, and fire department notification system.

ACCESS: Available in writing at staff stations and comprehended by training of all facility staff.

STAFF: Facility staff trained in Rescue, Alarm, Contain, and Extinguish/ Evacuate (RACE) and the implementation of a facility-wide fire watch.

DOCUMENTATION: Each tour is recorded with findings noting date, time, and staff initials. A fire watch tour is a periodic walking tour of the entire facility by one or more assigned and trained staff. The tour monitors the facility through direct observation of all rooms for possible signs of fire.

OCCURANCES: Fire alarm system outages can occur during construction, renovation, electrical storms or other unplanned events which eliminate part or all of the fire alarm system.

1. Contact the facility administrator, nurse director, and maintenance manager when any problems are encountered with the fire alarm system. (Action: staff)
2. Contact the fire alarm company should the maintenance manager be unable to correct the problem. (Action: administrator/nurse director/maintenance manager). Fire alarm company shall be on site or on contract until system is repaired, replaced or reinitialized and working.
3. Notify the Chief of the fire department at XXX-XXXX that the fire alarm system is not working correctly. (Action: administrator/nurse director/maintenance manager).
4. If the alarm system is inoperable for a time period of four (4) hours or more, notify the Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services (DHFS) Bureau of Quality Assurance (BQA) through the Regional Field Operations Director (RFOD). They can be contacted at (XXX) XXX-XXXX. (Action: administrator/nurse director/maintenance manager).
5. Fire watch procedure shall designate facility tours designating wing, floor, or building identifier. (Action: Facility Administrator)
6. Fire watch tours shall occur at ½ hour intervals, 24 hours a day. (Action: Administration)
7. Fire watch shall be performed by personnel solely dedicated to the fire watch and no other facility-related activities or events. (Action: Administration)
8. A fire watch should check and document the following in all rooms including:
 - Resident rooms (remove smoking materials and extension cords),
 - Dietary and Laundry rooms (remove lint from dryers and soiled linen),
 - Mechanical and Electrical rooms (remove combustible/flammable materials),
 - Fire department access to the facility (remove snow and ice from exits),
 - Fire department access to hydrants, sprinkler connections, standpipes, and fire extinguishers,
 - Exit access, exits, and exit discharge are unobstructed,
 - Storage of combustible or flammable materials shall be in approved containers or designated storage areas,
 - Identify temporary heating devices and have them removed,
 - Fire and Smoke doors closed properly,

- Machinery unnecessary to be running continuous is turned off,
 - Sprinkler valves shall be open and sealed, gauges indicate normal pressures, and sprinkler heads shall be unobstructed,
 - Construction or renovation work areas shall be monitored continuously.
9. Maintenance staff shall be available on site or on call for equipment emergency shutdown situations.
 10. Additional fire extinguishers shall be distributed facility-wide and staff shall be informed of locations.

Fire

In the event a potential fire situation is identified behind a door:

1. **Do Not Open Door.**
2. Touch door handle and door leaf and verify raised temperature. (Yes-proceed)
3. Smell for smoke or fumes. (Yes-proceed)
4. Implement '**RACE**' program: **R**escue, **A**larm, **C**ontain and **E**xtinguish/Evacuate.
5. Rescue/remove residents from immediate danger.
6. Activate a call to local fire department at XXX-XXXX if the fire alarm is not directly connected to the fire station.
7. Contain fire by shutting doors.
8. Extinguish and/or evacuate area.